

ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE

GRADED SERIES

CONTAINING THE DESCRIPTION OF THE DANCES
TOGETHER WITH THE TUNES

BY

CECIL J. SHARP.

VOL. I.



LONDON: NOVELLO AND COMPANY, LIMITED.

MADE IN ENGLAND.

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This series has been compiled at the request of the English Folk Dance Society, and is intended to serve as an introduction to the Country Dance. For a fuller and more detailed description of the Country Dance and an account of its history the dancer is referred to The Country Dance Book, Parts 1—6 (Country Dance Tunes, Sets I.—XI.), which contains the notation of 177 dances.

M. KARPELES.

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INTRODUCTION.

TECHNICAL TERMS AND SYMBOLS.

O = man; = woman.

THE diagram printed at the head of the notation of each dance shows the initial position of the dancers, the left margin of the page representing the top of the room and the right margin the bottom, the upper and lower sides representing the right and left walls of the room respectively. The top of the room is called the Prescuce.

The General Set, or the Set, denotes the area enclosed by the dancers.

In dances, or figures, in which only two couples are engaged, the term contrary is used to denote the man or woman other than the partner.

To pass by the right is to pass right shoulder to right shoulder; by the left, left shoulder to left shoulder.

To move up or down is to move toward the top or the bottom of the room.

To move is to dance forwards.

To fall back is to dance backwards.

When a man leads his partner he takes her right hand with his right hand if she is on his right, and her left hand with his left hand if she is on his left.

To cast off is to turn outward and dance outside the General Set.

To cast up or cast down is to turn outward (unless already so facing) and dance up or down outside the General Set.

The term clockwise (cl.) or counter-clockwise (c.cl.) are self-explanatory, and refer to the direction of circular movements.

To make a half-turn is to turn through half a circle so as to face in an opposite direction; to make a whole-turn is to make a complete revolution.

A Progressive dance consists of the repetition for an indefinite number of times of a series of movements, called the Complete Figure, each repetition being performed by the dancers in changed positions. The performance of each Complete Figure is called a Round.

A Progressive movement or figure is one, the performance of which leaves the dancers relatively in different positions.

A neutral dancer is one who, in a progressive dance, is not engaged in the performance of a Round.

PROGRESSIVE LONGWAYS DANCES.

In the whole-set dance the progression is effected by the transference in every Round of the top couple from the top to the bottom of the General Set, the rest of the couples moving up one place.

The duple minor-set dance is one in which the Complete Figure in each Round is performed simultaneously by subsidiary groups (known as minor-sets) of two adjacent couples.

During the course of each Round the upper and lower couples of each minor-set change places, the former moving down one place, the latter up. This will necessitate a rearrangement of the minor-sets in the following Round, and this is effected by each upper couple making a new minor-set with the couple immediately below, or—to put it in another way—each lower couple making a new minor-set by taking in the couple immediately above. In this way every couple, as the dance proceeds, will move steadily from one end of the Set to the other, the upper couples down, the lower ones up. Every couple upon reaching either end of the Set must remain neutral during the next round, after which it is will again enter the dance and progress in the direction opposite to that in which it had previously been moving (upper couples becoming lower couples, and vice versa).

STEPS

The running-step (r.s.) is a quiet, easy spring executed with a flexible ankle on the ball of the foot. The legs should be straight; the knees loose, but not bent; and the feet should take the ground directly under the body.

The walking-step (w.s.) is a modified form of the running-step in which the spring, though present, is scarcely noticeable.

The skipping-step (sk.s.) is the usual step-and-hop on alternate feet. The hop must be a small one-

The slipping-step (sl.s.) is a sideways step, the feet moving seissor-wise with the same rhythm and spring as in the skipping-step.

The polka-step is three steps on alternate feet and a hop.

There are, normally, two steps to each bar, falling, respectively, on the first and middle beats, whether the time be simple or compound.

MOVEMENTS AND FIGURES

THE DOUBLE.

The double is three steps forward or backward, followed by a closing of the feet-four steps in all.

THE TURN.

Two dancers face each other, join both hands with arms outstretched, swing round once clockwise (r.s. or sk.s.), separate and return to places. The dancers should face each other throughout the movement, and lean back slightly so as mutually to give and receive support.

THE SWING.

This is the same as the preceding movement except that the dancers swing round more than once before separating, and, on occasion, move from place to place.

THE HONOUR.

This is a formal obeisance made by partners to one another at the conclusion, and sometimes in the course, of the dance. The man bows, head erect, making a slight forward inclination of the body from the hips; the woman, placing one foot behind the other, makes a quick downward and upward movement by bending and straightening the knees.

THE SINGLE.

On the first beat of the bar a spring is made, forwards, or sideways, on to one foot, say the right; the left foot is then brought up beside it, the weight wholly or in part momentarily supported upon it, and, on the second beat of the bar, transferred to the right foot in position.

THE SET.

This is a movement of courtesy, addressed by one dancer to another, or more frequently by two dancers to each other simultaneously. It consists of a single to the right sideways, followed by a single to the left back to position (two bars).

SET-AND-HONOUR.

This consists of a single to the right and honour, followed by a single to the left and honour (four bars).

THE SIDE.

This, likewise, is a movement of courtesy. Two dancers face, move forward a double (r.s.), pass by the left, turn counter-clockwise on the third step and face one another as they bring their feet together (two bars). This movement is then repeated to places, the dancers returning along the same tracks, i.e., passing by the right, turning clockwise on the third step and facing one another as they bring their feet together.

ARM WITH THE RIGHT (OR LEFT).

This, again, is a movement of courtesy.

Two dancers face, meet, link right (or left) arms, swing round a complete circle (r.s.) clockwise (or counter-clockwise), unlink arms and fall back to places (four bars). The arms should be linked at the clows and, as in the Turn, the dancers must feel each other's weight.

TURN SINGLE.

The dancer makes a whole turn on his own axis, clockwise, in four steps, beginning with the right foot. The performer should be careful to make a slight spring from foot to foot at each step, and to regulate his movement so that all four steps are needed to complete the revolution (two bars).

RIGHT (OR LEFT) HANDS-ACROSS.

This is performed by four dancers standing in a square. Each dancer joins right (or left) hands with the dancer diagonally opposite. Holding their hands close together, chin-high, all dance round clockwise (or counter-clockwise).

HANDS-THREE, HANDS-FOUR, ETC.

Three or more dancers, as directed, form a ring, extend arms, Join hands a little above waist-level, and dance round. In the absence of specific instructions to the contrary it is to be understood that one complete circuit is to be danced, clockwise, the performers facing centre.

FIRST COUPLE LEADS DOWN THE MIDDLE AND BACK AGAIN AND CASTS ONE.

First man, taking his partner by the right hand with his own right hand, leads her down the middle (w.s.); he then raises his partner's right hand over her head, and they both make a half-turn counter-clockwise and face up (four bars). They skip back to places with crossed hands and then, releasing hands, cast off round second couple into second couple's place, second couple moving up into first couple's place (four bars).

HALF-POUSSETTE.

This is performed by two adjacent couples.

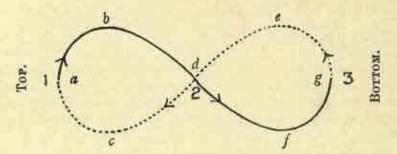
Each man faces his partner and takes her by both hands. The arms must be held out straight, and very nearly shoulder high.

First man, pushing his partner before him, moves forward four steps and then falls back four steps into the second couple's place, pulling his partner after him. Simultaneously, second man, pulling his partner with him, falls back four steps and then moves forward four steps into the first couple's place (four bars).

WHOLE-POUSSETTE.

When the half-poussette is followed by a complementary repetition of the same movement, each couple describing a complete circle or ellipse, the figure is called the whole-poussette.

THE STRAIGHT HEY FOR THREE.



No. I faces down, Nos. 2 and 3 up.

All simultaneously describe the figure eight, as shown in the above diagram, and return to places, passing along the unbroken line as they move down, and along the dotted line as they move up. At the beginning of the movement, therefore, No. 1 will dance along a b, No. 2 along d c, and No. 3 along g e, i.e., Nos. 1 and 2 will pass by the right, Nos. 1 and 3 by the left.

In order that the dancers may not obstruct one another the two lobes of the figure should be made as broad as time and space will permit.

THE STRAIGHT HEY FOR FOUR (OR MORE) DANCERS.



Odd numbers face down, even numbers up.

All simultaneously dance along the track shown in the diagram and return to places, moving along the nubroken line when going down, and along the dotted line when going up.

It will thus be seen :-

- That the dancers begin the movement by passing by the right.
- (2) That they reverse their direction at both ends by turning round to the right, i.e., clockwise,
- (3) That the regular sequence of right and left passes is broken by the omission of a left pass during the execution of the turn at either end.

THE CIRCULAR-HEY.

This movement is the same as the Grand Chain in the Lancers, except that the dancers do not take hands as they pass each other alternately by the right and left.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS.

MOTION IN THE DANCE.

THE Country Dance is pre-eminently a figure dance, depending in the main for its expressiveness upon the weaving of patterned, concerted evolutions rather than upon intricate steps or elaborate body-movements. An analysis of the way in which the traditional folk-dancer moves shows that it is based upon two main principles:—

- (1) The weight of the body in motion must always be supported wholly on one foot or the other, and never carried on both feet at the same moment. From this it follows that the transition from step to step, i.e., the transference of the weight from one foot to the other, must always be effected by spring.
- (2) The motive force, although derived in part from this foot-spring, is chiefly due to the action of gravity, brought into play by the inclination of the body from the vertical.
 - The function of the legs is to support the body rather than to help to move it forward, the actual motion being set up, regulated, and directed by the sway and balance of the body, as in skating. The body cannot, however, be used in this way, that is to set up and regulate motion, unless it is carried essentially in line from head to foot, without bend at the neck or at the waist, or sag at the knees.

THE TECHNIQUE OF FIGURE-DANCING.

The first requisite of the figure dancer is the capacity to move hither and thither, freely and casily, with complete control over direction and speed. Having attained this power he must then learn (1) to time his movements accurately; (2) to phrase them in accordance with the music; (3) to blend them into one continuous movement without halts or hesitations; and (4) to execute them in concert with his fellow-dancers.

Timing.—As the movements and the figures of the dance are but the translation, in terms of bodily action, of the music which accompanies them, the dancer when learning a dance should first of all listen carefully to the tune, and, if possible, memorise it. In particular he should note the number and relative lengths of the several phrases, and calculate the number of steps that can be danced to each of them.

Phrasing.—It is just as necessary for the dancer to phrase his steps and movements as it is for the musician to phrase his notes and strains, or for the writer to punctuate his sentences. The purpose in each case is the same—to define and make intelligible what would otherwise be ambiguous or meaningless. A series of equally accented dance-steps, musical sounds, or verbal syllables, conveys no meaning until by the periodic recurrence of stronger accents the steps, sounds, or words, are separated into groups, co-ordinated, and some sort of relationship established between them.

Technically, the dancer phrases his movements by gradating the accents which he imparts to his steps, usually giving the strongest accent to the first step of a group and the weakest to the last. The strength of the step-accent depends partly upon foot-spring, but mainly upon body-balance, that is to say, less upon the strength of the spring forward than upon the momentum generated and controlled by the inclination of the body in the direction of motion. Before beginning a movement from rest, therefore, the dancer should throw his weight on to one foot and adjust the inclination of his body so that the first step of his phrase may be made with the requisite emphasis.

The dancer must never make any movement in the dance, however insignificant, that is not phrased, i.e., executed rhythmically in accord with the music. This injunction must be held to apply as much to arm-movements as to steps. For instance, in giving or taking a hand, he should begin the movement in plenty of time—two or three beats beforehand—and raise and move the arm in rhythm with the music. The arms, when not actively employed, should hang loosely by the sides and be allowed to swing or move as they will.

5-Vol. 1.

Continuity.—The directions given in the notation are divided into Parts, figures, &c., only for the sake of clearness of description. The aim of the dancer should be to conceal, not to call attention to, these divisions. The dance should be regarded as one continuous movement as complete and organic in structure as the movements of a symphony.

Concerted Movement.—The performer in a concerted dance has not only to consider his own individual movements, but to relate them to those of his companions in the dance. The expert figure-dancer is probably far more conscious of the movements of his fellow-dancers than of his own; indeed, his pleasure, as well as theirs, depends very largely upon the completeness with which he effaces his own personality and loses himself in the dance.

STYLE.

The foregoing explanations will, it is hoped, enable the reader to interpret the figures described in the notations that are presently to follow. The dancer should, however, be reminded that technical proficiency has no value except as an aid to artistic expression, and indeed, if it be not so used, the dance will never rise above the level of a physical exercise.

Although in the nature of things it is impossible to instruct the dancer how he may impart asthetic significance to his physical movements, there are certain general considerations to which his attention may profitably be directed.

The folk-dance, owing to its corporate, unconscious origin, is essentially an impersonal dance, a unique instrument for the expression of those ideas and emotions that are held and felt collectively, but peculiarly unfitted for the exploitation of personal idiosynerasics. The folk-dance, therefore, is emphatically not the place for the display of those self-conscious airs and graces, fanciful posings and so forth, that play so large a part in dances of a more conventional order. The dancer must put these aside and seek elsewhere for material upon which to mould his style, and this he will find in the character of the dance itself.

The dominant characteristic of the Country Dance is its "gay simplicity." Every movement should, therefore, be executed quietly, easily, and with economy of motion, and in a simple, unaffected manner. The Country Dance is, moreover, a mannered dance, gentle and gracious, formal in a simple, straightforward way, but above all gay and sociable. The spirit of merriment, however, although never wholly absent from the dance, is not always equally obvious.

The clue to the emotional variations of the dance will be found in the accompanying music. The dance is but the interpretation, or translation, in terms of bodily action, of the music upon which it is woven, just us the melody of the song is primarily the expression of the text. The style of the dance is, therefore, determined by the character of its time.

It should be added that any spectacular qualities that the Country Dance may possess are fortuitous, or, rather, the inevitable outcome of the perfect fashioning of means to an end. Its beauty, being implicit, needs no artificial embellishment. An elaborate theatrical setting would be as irrelevant and impertinent as for the dancers to deck themselves in rich and fanciful costumes. All that the dancers need is plenty of space, an even, non-slippery floor, and dresses which will allow to the body and limbs complete freedom of action.

NOTATION.

1. BRIGHTON CAMP.

Longways for as many as will.

	2	3	4	
0	2	3	4	

31	tustc.	MOVEMENTS.
		(Whole-Set)
	(ad lib.)	All face up. Partners cross hands, i.e., join right hands with right and left hands with
	47.	left, holding right hands above left. First couple, followed by the other couples,
		casts off to the left, dances down to the bottom of the Set, turns to the left and
3	100	dances up the middle to position (sk.s.).
В1	1-8	First couple swings down the middle to the lowest place (sk.s.); while all the other couples move up one place (progressive).
B2	1-8	All couples swing (sk.s.).

2. GALOPEDE.

Longways for as many as will.

	2	3	4		4	23	
1	2	3	(4)	•			

MUS	sic.	MOVEMENTS.
		(Whole-Set)
Al	1-4	Partners face. Men take hands and women take hands. All move forward a double, partners honouring each other on the first beat of the second bar, and fall back a double to places (r.s., or w.s.).
	5-8	Release hands and partners change places, passing each other by the right (r.s., or w.s.).
A2		Movement as in A1 repeated to places.
В		All couples swing (sk.s.).
C		First couple swings down the middle to the lowest place (sk.s.); while all the other couples move up one place (progressive).

3. NANCY'S FANCY.

Longways for as many as will.

1	2	3	4	2 20	*
(I)	(2)	(3)	(4)	6.0	

MUS	sic	MOVEMENTS.
		(Duple Minor-Set.)
A	1-4	Partners face. First and second men move forward a double and back; simultaneously first and second women join right hands and move forward a double and back, passing between the two men (r.s., or w.s.).
	5-8	Movement repeated, the two men joining right hands and passing between the two women (r.s., or w.s.).
В		First couple leads down the middle and back again and casts one.
С		First and second couples swing (sk.s.).

4. THE BLACK NAG.

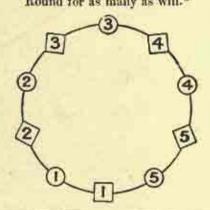
Longways for six.

1 2 3

① ② ③

м	isic.	MOVEMENTS.
	30	
A	7.4	First Part.
A	1-4 5-8	Partners lead up a double and fall back a double to places (r.s.).
B1	1-2	That again. First man and first woman face each other, take both hands, and dance four slips up (sl.s.).
	3-4	Second couple the same.
	5-6	Third couple the same.
	7-8	All turn single.
B2	1-2	Third man and third woman face each other, take both hands, and dance four slips down to places (sl.s.).
	3-4	Second couple the same.
	5-6	First couple the same.
	7-8	All turn single.
		SECOND PART.
A	1-4	Partners side (r.s.).
	5-8	That again.
B1	1-2	First man and third woman, right shoulders forward, slip across and change places, passing back to back (sl.s.).
	3-4	First woman and third man change places in like manner.
	5-6	Second man and second woman do the same.
	7-8	All turn single.
B2	1-8	All that again to places.
		THIRD PART.
Α	1-4	Partners arm with the right (r.s.).
	5-8	Partners arm with the left (r.s.).
B1	1-8	The men dance the bey-for-three (sk.s.).
B2	1-8	The women dance the hey-for-three (sk.s.); while the men turn single in the last two bars-

5. GATHERING PEASCODS. Round for as many as will.*



Mus	C.	MOVEMENTS.
		FIRST PART.
A1	1-4	All take hands and dance round in a ring eight slips, clockwise (sl.s.).
	5-6	All release hands and turn single.
A2	1-4	All take hands and dance round in a ring eight slips, counter-clockwise, back to places (sl.s.).
	5-6	All release hands and turn single.
Bi	1-6	The men take hands, dance round in a ring twelve slips, clockwise, and full back to places (sl.s.).
B2	1-6	The women do the same.
C1	1-2	Men move forward a double toward the centre, swinging up their arms and clapping their hands above their heads on the third step, i.e., on the first beat of the second bar (r.s.).
	3-4	Women do the same; while the men fall back a double to places (r.s.).
	5-6	Men move forward as before; while women full back a double to places.
	7-8	Men fall back a double to places, turning single as they do so.
C2	1-8	As in C1, the women starting the movement instead of the men.
		SECOND PART.
A1	1-4	Partners side (r.s.).
	5-6	All turn single.
A2	1-6	All that again.
B1	1-6	The women take hands and dance round in a ring twelve slips, clockwise, and fall back to places (sl.s.).
B2	1-6	The men do the same.
CI	1-8	As in First Part, the women starting the elapping movement.
C2	1-8	As in First Part, the men starting the clapping movement.
		THIRD PART.
A1	I-4	Partners arm with the right (r.s.).
	5-6	All turn single.
A2	1-4	Partners arm with the left (r.s.).
	5-6	All turn single,
B1, B	All the second s	As in First Part.

6. RUFTY TUFTY.

For four.

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М	USIC,	MOVEMENTS.
		FIRST PART.
A	1-4	Couples face, move forward a double, meet, and fall back a double to places (r.s.).
	5-8	That again.
В	1-4	Partners set and turn single.
	5-8	That again.
С	1-4	All face outward (the two couples standing back to back). Men with their left hands lead their partners a double outward (i.e., away from the Set), turn round and with right hands lead them back a double to places (r.s.).
	5-6	All turn single.
	7-10	First man, with right hand, leads his contrary up a double, turns round, and, with left hand, leads her down a double to places; while second man, with right hand, leads his contrary woman down a double, turns round, and, with left hand, leads her up a double to places (r.s.).
	11-12	All turn single.
		SECOND PART.
A	1-4	Partners side (r.s.).
	5-8	That again.
В	1-8	As in First Part.
С	1-12	As in First Part.
		THIRD PART.
A	1-4	Partners arm with the right (r.s.).
	5-8	Partuers arm with the left (r.s.).
В	1-8	As in First Part.
C	1-12	As in First Part.

MUSIC.

NOTES FOR MUSICIAN.

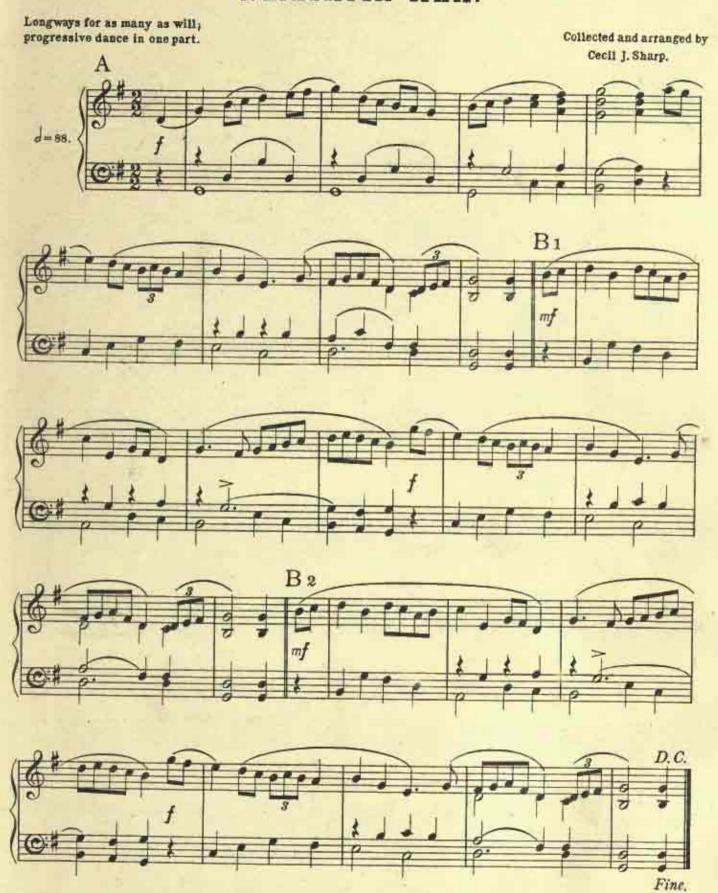
The dances to which the times in this volume belong are divided into two or more parts of equal length. The music in the text is in each case that which is required for the accompaniment of a single part. In non-progressive dances, therefore, the music with the repeats as printed, must be played as many times as there are parts. When, however, a part is progressive, the music to that part must be repeated as often as the dancers direct.

For the guidance of the musician the number and character (i.e., progressive or otherwise) of the parts, into which each dance is divided, are given in the score.

Metronome figures are given only in those cases where there is traditional authority upon which to compute them. The tempo must always depend upon the character of the tune and of the dance and, to a certain extent, upon the disposition of the dancers and the accompanist. M.M. of or . = 116-138, being based upon the custom and practice of recent years, may, perhaps, be given as a general guide.

The edition and date at the head of the tune refer to the collections of John Playford entitled "The English Daneing Master,"

1. BRIGHTON CAMP.

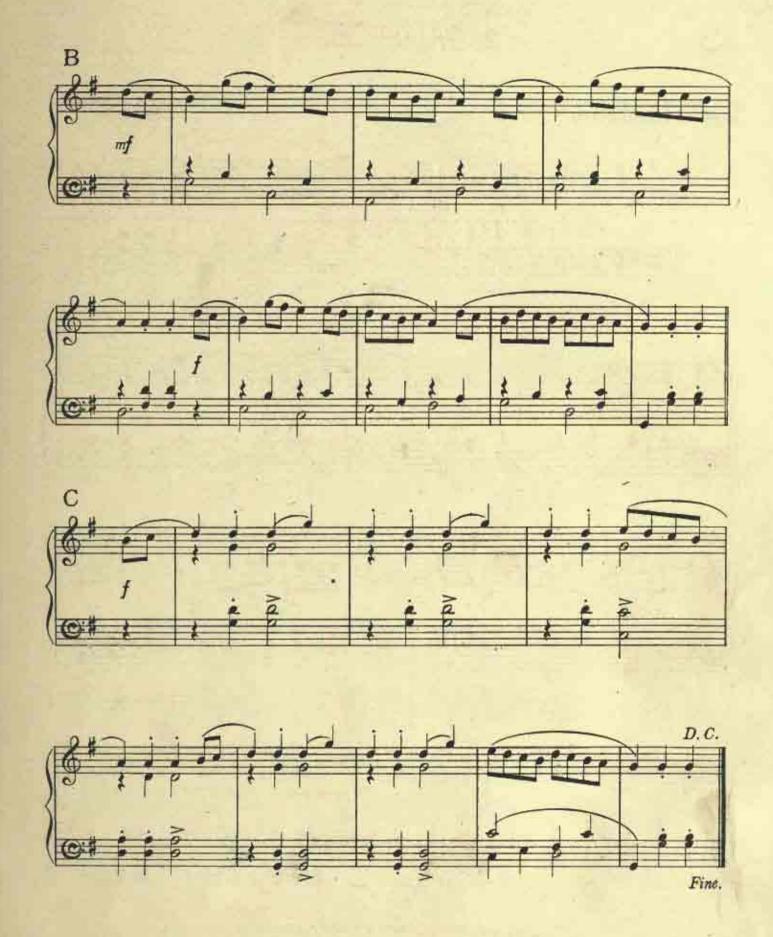


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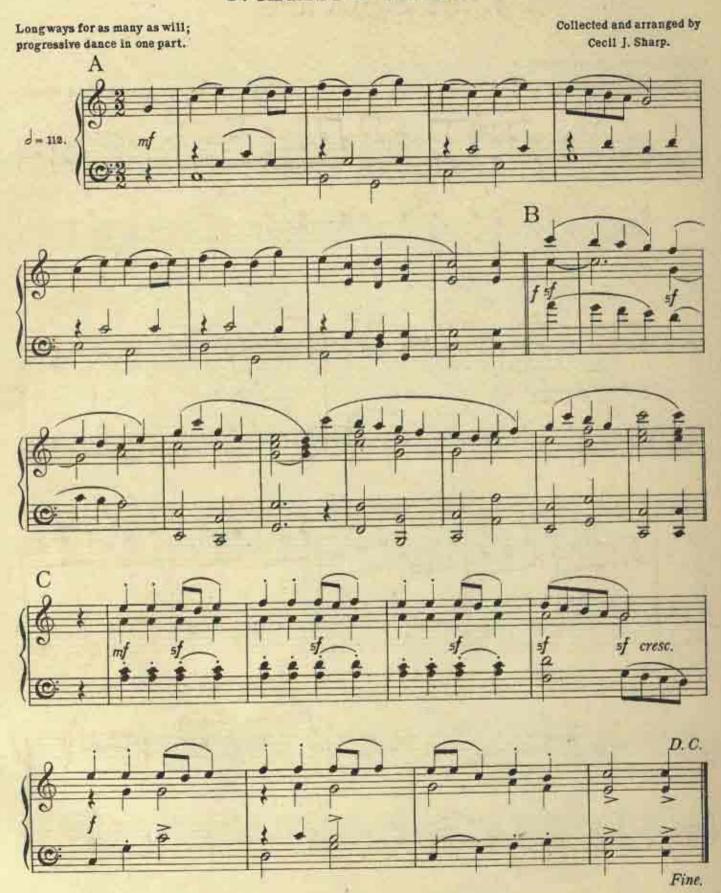
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3. NANCY'S FANCY.



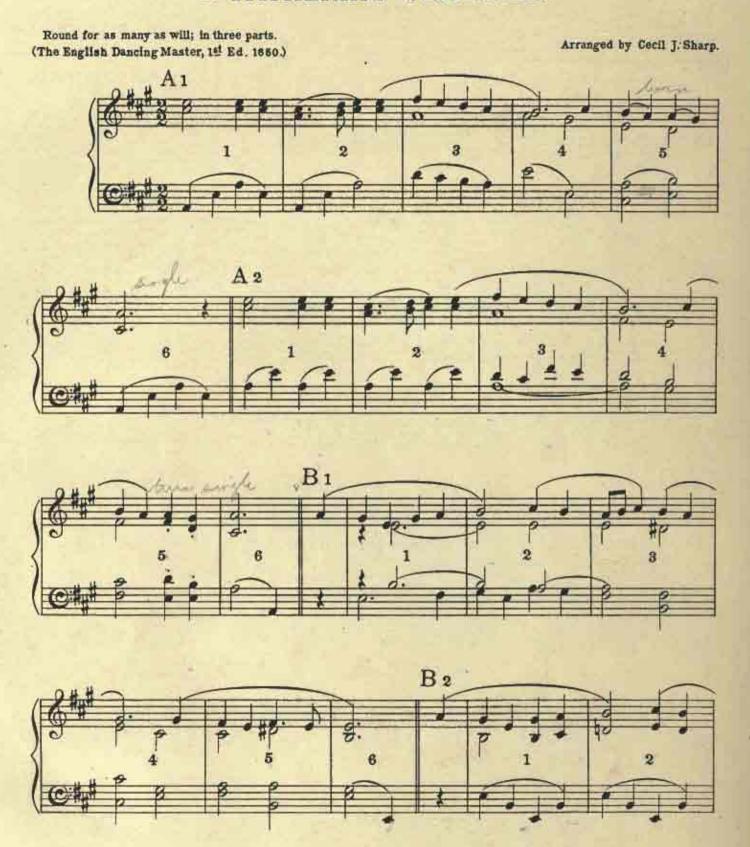
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